

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5260

INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ID

SUBJECT: SAWITO HAS ANOTHER DAY IN COURT

REF: JAKARTA 15490

1. SUMMARY: ANOTHER SESSION OF THE CONSPIRACY TRIAL OF SAWITO KARTOWIBOWO WAS HELD NOVEMBER 28 TO HEAR TESTIMONY FROM TWO DEFENSE WITNESSES WHO FULLY SUPPORTED SAWITO'S PLANS. THEY BOTH GAVE EVIDENCE THAT FORMER VICE PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD HATTA WAS READY AND WILLING TO TAKE POWER IF SUHARTO WOULD RELINQUISH IT. WAWITO, WHO CONTINUES TO ENJOY THE SUPPORT OF THE CROWDS, PROVIDED A MOMENT OF EXCITEMENT BY REFERRING TO A REPORT THAT SUHARTO HAD BEEN ENGAGED INSMUGGLING, END SUMMARY.

2. THE TRIAL OF SAWITO KARTOWIBOWO ON CHARGES OF CONSPIRING TO OVERTHROW PRESIDENT SUHARTO RESUMED NOVEMBER 28 WITH TESTIMONY FROM TWO WITNESSES FAVORABLE TO THE DEFENDENT. FORMER AMBASSADOR SOEDJONO CONCLUDED HIS TESTIMONY BEGUN AT THE LAST SESSION (REFTEL), TELLING THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COURT THAT FORMER VICE PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD HATTA HAD ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE THAT PRESIDENT SUHARTO SHOULD TURN OVER POWER TO HIM IF THE TRANSFER WERE VOLUNTARY. THE NEXT WITNESS, FORMER MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND MINISTER OF ECONOMY ISKAK TJOKROHADISURYO, ALSO CLAIMED THAT HATTA WAS READY TO ACCEPT A TRANSFER OF POWER FROM SUHARTO.

3. ISKAK WENT ON TO PAINT A BLEAK PICTURE OF CONDITIONS IN INDONESIA WHICH HAD INSPIRED SAWITO AND HIS TROUP TO TAKE ACTION. HE SAID CORRUPTION AMONG OFFICIALS HAD BEEN ON THE INCREASE, SO MUCH SO THAT HATTA HAD FREQUENTLY ADVISED SUHARTO TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, BUT TO NO AVAIL. ISKAK SAID HE HAD AGREED TO SAWITO'S PLAN BECAUSE THE NATION WAS IN A CRITICAL CONDITION AND SUHARTO NEEDED TO BE REPLACED. HE ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED SUHARTO WOULD HAVE SIGNED THE LETTER TRANSFERRING POWER TO HATTA IF IT ACTUALLY HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO HIM.

4. A MINOR SENSATION WAS CREATED WHEN SAWITO, EXERCISING HIS RIGHT TO QUESTION THE WITNESSES, MENTIONED THAT GENERAL ISHAK DJUARSA HAD TOLD HATTA IN 1974 THAT PRESIDENT SUHARTO HAD ONCE BEEN INVOLVED IN SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES. THE PRESIDING JUDGE IMMEDIATELY ORDERED SAWITO TO STOP TALKING ABOUT THAT SINCE IT WAS IRRELEVANT TO THE CASE.

5. THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE TRIAL WAS DESCRIBED BY ONE NEWSPAPER AS GENERALLY CALM AND ORDERLY, ALTHOUGH THE DEFENSE COUNSELS FREQUENTLY PROTESTED AGAINST THE JUDGES' MANNER OF QUESTIONING THE DEFENDENT AND THE WITNESSES. THE AUDIENCE HAD BEEN CAREFULLY LIMITED TO PREVENT DISTURBANCES, BUT THEIR SYMPATHIES WERE OBVIOUSLY WITH SAWITO, AND SHOUTS OF "LONG LIVE SAWITO" WERE HEARD AT THE END OF THE SESSION. THE TRIAL WILL BE CONTINUED ON DECEMBER 5.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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